

EXHIBIT 11

Internet Archive Blogs

A blog from the team at archive.org



As Calls to Ban Books Intensify, Digital Librarians Offer Perspective

Posted on November 24, 2021 by Caralee Adams



Image credit: Roger Nomer | The Joplin Globe

From Texas to Virginia to Pennsylvania, there is a growing movement to challenge books in schools that some suggest are inappropriate for students. Concern goes beyond explicit content; it now includes opposition to LGBTQIA material, the history of racism, and material that may cause discomfort to readers.

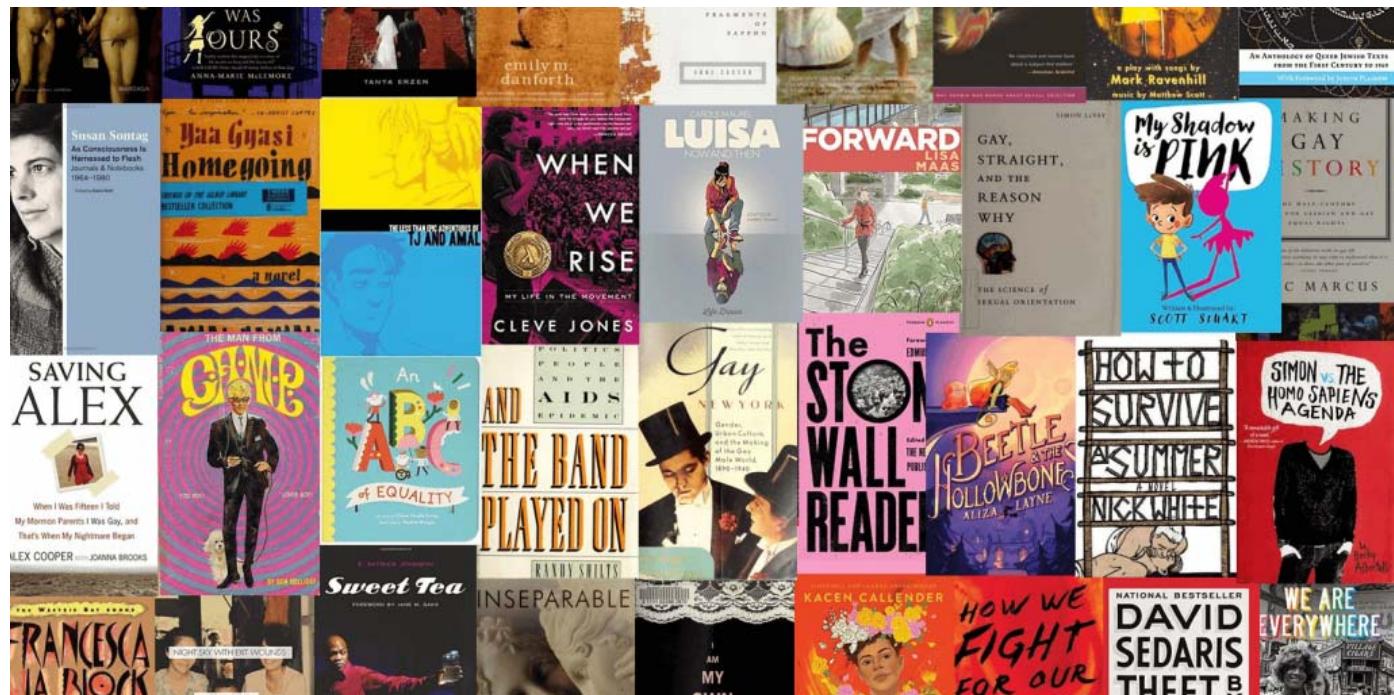
While efforts to ban books are not new, the solutions to counter censorship are—thanks to technology that is used to create access for all.



The Internet Archive's Open Library (<https://openlibrary.org>) does not face the same local pressures that many school districts or school libraries do. At a time when students and teachers may be encountering limited access to content in their local community, the Internet Archive acquires and digitizes material for its online library, and lends a wide array of books for free to anyone, anytime.

For example, the American Library Association's list of most challenged books in the past decade are available in a **curated collection**. Among the titles: *The Glass Castle* by Jennette Walls, banned for offensive language and sexually explicit content; *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, cited as being insensitive, anti-family and violent; and *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out* by Susan Kuklin, challenged for its LGBTQIA content and the perceived effects on young people who would read it.

Books dealing with gay and trans rights have long been targeted in school libraries. There are more than 1,800 titles in Open Library's **LGBTQ Collection**—sorted, searchable and available to borrow online for free. Many of the novels, memoirs and works of history are not otherwise accessible to people who live in rural areas or places where those materials are explicitly banned.



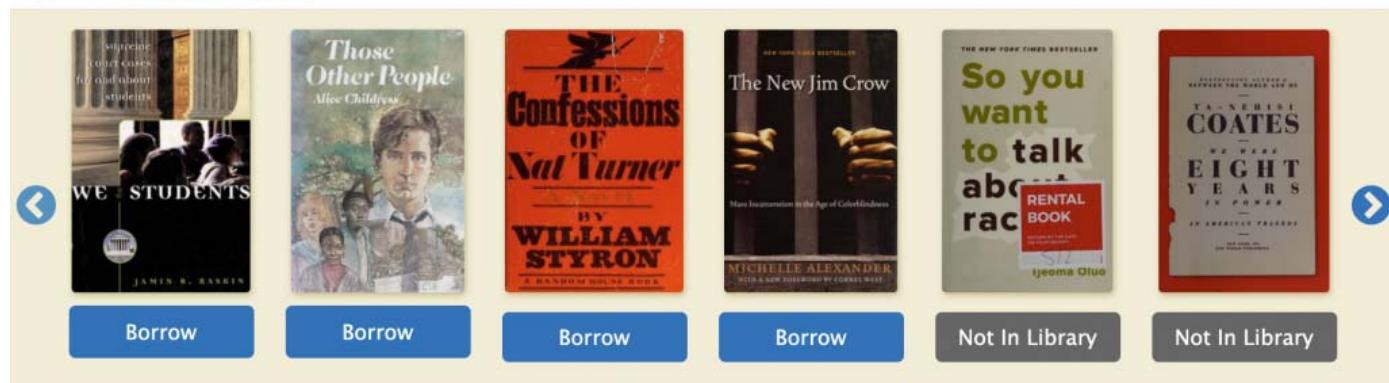
Browse Open Library's **LGBTQ Collection**, one of the many curated collections available through Open Library.

New Challenges, New Responses

The new efforts to ban books are taking a much broader view of limiting access. Across the country, some objectors say books like *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988, should not be discussed or available in schools. As these lists are made public, Open Library's volunteer team of [Open Librarians](#) take action to ensure that these books remain accessible to all.

Recently, Open Library created a [collection of books](#) removed from circulation in the Goddard School District in Kansas. It includes *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas and *Fences* by August Wilson, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1987. A small [collection of banned books from Alaska's Mat-Su Valley](#) features *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller and *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Racism & Anti-Racism



View the collection of [850 books](#) challenged in Texas.

Open Library's lead community librarian, Lisa Seaberg, is [curating a collection](#) of 850 books that [have recently been challenged in Texas](#). Among the books targeted are ones that mention human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, contain material that might make students feel uncomfortable or distressed because of their race or sex or convey that a student, by virtue of their race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive.

What's become caught up in this "wide net," said Seaberg, are books about health education, teen pregnancy, civics, philosophy, religion, anthropology, inventions, encyclopedias and, ironically, a [novel about book censorship in a high school](#). Those who favor removing certain books see an opportunity and momentum, she said, but the difference in this moment is that libraries are able to provide access to titles regardless of where the reader is located.

One reason books get banned is because political forces within an area become stronger than the populace, said Mek, who leads the Open Library team for the Internet Archive. "Open Library is trying to bridge these inequity gaps across geographies and social classes. We invite the populace to come together and participate in a digital sanctuary where our rich and diverse cultural heritage isn't subject to censorship by the few with special interests."

“[T]here’s a difference between sharing an opinion and robbing someone of the opportunity to form their own.”

Mek, Open Library team lead

At the most basic level, banning books is about restricting access to knowledge, said Lisa Petrides, chief executive officer and founder of the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

“The impact of this on schools means that students are exposed to a limited set of world views, which is extremely detrimental to critical thinking, reflective analysis and discussion,” said Petrides. “Perhaps even more importantly as we are seeing today, this means that educators and librarians are increasingly put in difficult situations, having to face the threat of reprisal from administrators or school boards, who are themselves increasingly less willing to stand up for the First Amendment rights of their teachers and learners.”

The Path Forward

Everyone’s perspectives should matter and be represented in the democratic process. A library must offer diverse materials so people can draw their own conclusions, said Mek. He embraces the oft-cited quote from librarian Jo Godwin: “A truly great library contains something in it to offend everyone.”

“It’s important for informed members of society to share their opinions,” he says. “But there’s a difference between sharing an opinion and robbing someone of the opportunity to form their own. To change hearts and minds, write a compelling book—don’t take authors you disagree with off the shelves. The Open Library community is honoring these values by giving contested titles their spots back on the shelf.”

Seaberg says, hopefully, recent book challenges will ultimately fail and access to a range of books will be restored. “If students walk into a library and they have books that only present one side of an issue, or are only relatable to a certain group in a culture, it excludes a lot of people,” she says. “They might not even know this other content exists.”

You can browse a full list of Open Library’s curated collections [here](#). To volunteer for Open Library and help curate collections, please visit <https://openlibrary.org/volunteer#librarian>.

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Posted in Announcements, Books Archive, Lending Books, News, Open Library | Tagged banned books, censorship, education, openlibrary, school | 37 Replies

37 thoughts on “As Calls to Ban Books Intensify, Digital Librarians Offer Perspective”



Not Quite Zorro

November 25, 2021 at 5:32 am

[quote]

One reason books get banned is because political forces within an area become stronger than the populace, said Mek, who leads the Open Library team for the Internet Archive.

[/quote]

Er, I could not find a last name for Mek in the article. Did I miss it?

[quote]

Seaberg says, hopefully, recent book challenges will ultimately fail and access to a range of books will be restored.

[/quote]

I hope so, too, but I must say that the advent of the 21st century only seems to have emboldened those who believe themselves qualified to decide what other people get to see. Here is a quote that never seems to go out of style:

[quote]

They began by controlling books of cartoons and then detective books and, of course, films, one way or another, one group or another, political bias, religious prejudice, union pressures; there was always a minority afraid of something, and a great majority afraid of the dark, afraid of the future, afraid of the past, afraid of the present, afraid of themselves and shadows of themselves.”

[/quote]

The above was written 70 years ago. It is funny how some things never change.



Ray Bradbury

November 25, 2021 at 3:13 pm

NEXT to be banned will be “Fahrenheit 451”



Caleb Bradley

November 30, 2021 at 9:08 pm

Ray Bradbury, author of *Fahrenheit 451*, died on June 5, 2012 (aged 91).



Floyd

November 26, 2021 at 6:13 pm

Does this also include protecting books that speak against transgenderism? Amazon recently banned a book that opposed transgenderism so curious if that gets protected as well, or if that's an *exception*



Me

November 30, 2021 at 6:08 pm

Exactly.



Vladsmen

November 30, 2021 at 6:35 pm

What's the title of the book? I'm not from US so I might look for it wherever it can be found.



Djangolem Punisher

December 1, 2021 at 8:10 am

Amazon is not a library, it is a store and a marketplace for retailers. As such it gets to decide not to sell certain books. Much like a shop „banning“ tobacco, Amazon „banning“ a book opposing the human rights of trans* persone isn't quite what it seems to you. It's just a way of saying: we don't want to sell things that kill.

Transphobia does kill, you know. Having said this: a library certainly is a much better place for such content, as it can provide an opportunity for reflection and discussion. Amazon just provides one for business, sadly.



giso

November 27, 2021 at 11:31 am

great post
thnaks



Stan Godlovitch

November 29, 2021 at 5:32 am

Are there any grounds taken to be sufficient for censorship? Or for banning any title? One issue wanting debate concerns the publication of material which can be shown to create sufficient social antagonism as to lead to violence against some targeted group. Is that alright? Is it genuinely believed that any such problems can be sorted out with a mere debate?

**Void**

November 30, 2021 at 7:11 pm

“can be shown to be” -> By whose authority good sir? Why should we believe them if they only mechanism they can think of to combat a bad idea is to silence their opposition? Should our would be literary hall monitors wear yellow arm bands or red ones?

Whose revisionist history / cooperate sponsored science / blatant propaganda gets to decide which idea’s get silenced and for what reason? It damn sure won’t be the targeted and vulnerable among us.

“mere debate” -> Words on pages are the best place for humans to put their darkest passions. Once on paper they words that express a bad idea can be challenged word by word; Deconstructed, tweaked and redirected by author, opponents and audience alike. In our skulls the bad ideas bounce around and in our hearts they amplify themselves in silent darkness until the pot of vile hatred boileth over into the real world tragedies you would theoretically aim to prevent.

Let bad ideas die a very public death.

**Roy Murphy**

November 30, 2021 at 7:31 pm

My history students once asked me if “Mein Kampf” should be banned as its influence was horrific. My reply was ,” No. Bad books don’t hurt people, bad people do though”. It is the minds of people that should be educated enough to openly debate and ignore a bad book. But it should be on an open shelf. It’s probably age restriction, or librarian’s “curation”, and levels of maturity that need to be discussed.

**OJ**

December 1, 2021 at 12:31 pm

If a motivating book encourages a soul to greatness, a moral book to ethics, an academic book to knowledge, why shouldn’t you expect a book on murder to encourage murder, or one on rape to encourage rape?

We’re fools if we think what we watch, read or listen does not shape us. Look around you.

**Brian**

November 30, 2021 at 7:58 pm

If a person or persons become physically violent by reading a book, the problem is with that person or persons, not the book.

**OJ**

December 1, 2021 at 12:34 pm

Yes! And if they're stirred to great positive action by reading a book, don't credit the book; the person was already great anyway.

If books don't matter, let's rid ourselves of all of them. If they don't transform, for good or evil, why have any?

Unless of course you're saying they can transform for good, but not for evil.

**Olive Black**

November 30, 2021 at 5:39 pm

Places like Amazon are banning books as well. Those that do not conform to the current political ideology are deemed 'poison' for the minds of those they seek to control. Just like the banned books of old. It is not just one sided. It is not just the right who wants to ban the left. The left is also complicit.

**Michele Fry**

November 30, 2021 at 5:59 pm

There is a big difference between "banning books" from public libraries (a bad thing), and restricting books from school libraries while children are in their formative years. Children, all with half-formed brains and immature emotions and from vastly different cultures, do not benefit from focusing their attention on problematic adult themes. Plenty of time for that in college and as adults. First, teach them to read, write, cipher, appreciate science, beauty, engineering marvels of today, finance and successful enterprises. They have the rest of their lives to delve into the sordid side of human existence. Age-appropriate is the key to all educational programming and first and foremost, protecting our children from crippling emotional harm should be every educator's top goal. If you wonder why there is so much teen suicide and drug abuse, perhaps it is because adults expose children to depressing themes so early, without proper foundation, that they give up before they begin.

**Benjamin**

November 30, 2021 at 6:34 pm

Look up Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe. It is interesting that one isn't mentioned here. It has explicit images in it, it is available in schools and some say those who want to ban it are harming gender non-conforming kids.

**Antonio Jr Magallanes Villamor**

November 30, 2021 at 6:57 pm

We are also facing a ban on books advocated by the current Duterte government here in the Philippines. They want left-leaning books (e.g., containing topics of communism) to be taken out of the state libraries. A sad plight.

**elie**

November 30, 2021 at 7:36 pm

Despite the manipulative framing by the Mass Media of who's doing the book banning, the reality is that no one is happier to ban certain books than progressives.

**Tony S.**

November 30, 2021 at 7:36 pm

You speak of "material which can be shown to create sufficient social antagonism as to lead to violence against some targeted group." Would you have included 19th-century Abolitionist tracts? At the time, they certainly would have fit your definition.

**Jadon Byrd**

November 30, 2021 at 8:42 pm

I am afraid for the future generations if this is how petty we have become. It all started with someone getting offended at something, and then everything got canceled (*cough* thank you for that, Twitter). I want to paint a scenario for all of you reading this. Let's say that Texas becomes its own country and disbands from the United States. If they are allowed to have their way, their censorship of information will take full effect, and, like the article says, provide an extremely limited world view. When people say knowledge is power, It's not just for aesthetics. But any power, whether it is physical or aesthetic, is dangerous. Limited world view is a disease in its own right. Limited world view has caused so much of the pain and wars that we still talk about today. It is why people are still racist and sexist today. Because even when the general populous thinks we have moved past it, there is still that one small minded person. Then that one person can tell his children and his friends and pretty soon, everyone shares his opinions. Influence is just as dangerous, if not, more dangerous, than knowledge. That is why we still have people that believe that the earth is flat, or that chocolate milk comes from brown cows. (And yes, according to a study 7% of the world population thinks that. I know that sound small, but that is still over 10,000 people!) So I say we need to take part in a nation-wide bout of civil disobedience. We need to refuse to pay the taxes that allow these law-makers to step all over us and stand up

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for our right to knowledge. I know this is a forgotten rule, but we are only allowed to be governed if we as a people consent to it. Which means that when they pose a law like this that prohibits us from having a wider world view and critical thinking so they can fill their own malicious agendas, we need to cause civil disobedience, civil unrest. Because if we don't, if we allow them to walk all over us, they win. And fascism will reign. They are hiding behind their laws, using it as an excuse to oppress us. For example, Exxon Mobil's CEO recently got caught lying to everyone, about how they are safely extracting their oil and fossil fuels. But it turns out they were actually doing it in an area that harmed the wild life. And that just made me so mad because I felt that nature had already been dealt a bad enough blow from climate change that WE caused. I am an 11th Grader in North Carolina. I am abhorrent that this is the world I am going to try to live in. Let me be an influence for anyone who decides to read this. Please share this with anyone who might be able to make a difference from it.

**Matthew Teets**

November 30, 2021 at 8:47 pm

We don't need our Public schools teaching this stuff to Our students. This includes what is on their library shelves. Those shelves, especially at the lower levels should be politically and Gender-wise Neutral and Sex-Ed free. Let the kids form their own opinions and be guided by the people who are supposed to give them that guidance- Their Parents.

**ThirteenthLetter**

November 30, 2021 at 9:10 pm

It's so weird how this entire post claims the only problem is books being taken off shelves by conservatives, when the past ten years have been nonstop left-wingers attempting to censor, rewrite, ban, and in extreme circumstances actually burn (<https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/book-burning-at-ontario-francophone-schools-as-gesture-of-reconciliation-denounced>) books and other creative material they don't like. Are you going to acknowledge this and forthrightly state that the left doesn't get any more ability to censor than the right does, or would that be too politically dangerous for you oh-so-brave truthtellers and fighters for free expression?

**Eunice Marjorie Conlon**

November 30, 2021 at 9:16 pm

We had such Bans in the past from Christian Clerics who his their heads in sand, they did not want anyone to contemplate life upon earth and evolve was possibly by chance and not by GOD. We overcame this as we will overcome a new attack upon Civil Liberties.

**vijay**

November 30, 2021 at 10:40 pm

Appreciate that you don't ban books selectively, and have many resources regarding still controversial topics of history shunned by well-funded mainstream establishment historians and tenured academics, such as those of historical revisionism regarding the world wars – especially the decades before and the aftermath. The only way to come to a complete understanding is to look at all materials, rather than just internalize and repeat the one-sided story that we have been fed for 75+ years.

Those calling for censorship and banning obviously haven't yet read enough dystopian fiction, or lived through and experienced totalitarian dictatorships.

**Patrick Winn**

November 30, 2021 at 11:07 pm

That is really interesting. From my perspective it is NOT left wing/activist material that is being banned. It is conservative material. Very interesting that those who once decried lack of freedom of speech/press, are now those who silence those they do not agree with. Since the folks that run this website are pretty much on the left, they are constructing present day book banning as if it is coming from conservatives. NOPE. It is the left. DON'T GIVE THEM A FREE PASS.

**Shirley Rougely**

December 1, 2021 at 12:03 am

You CLEARLY didn't read the article Patrick, otherwise you'd know that the books that are being banned are primarily from African American authors, and those in the LGBTQ+ community; minority groups that have been persecuted in the past and unfortunately in the present too by conservatives, and they're being banned by CONSERVATIVE lawmakers in red states like Texas that was referenced in the article, which you would have known had you ACTUALLY READ THE ARTICLE; I've seen many books from conservative authors like Tucker Carlson, Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, and many others in either physical retail stores like Walmart, and online e-tailers like Books-A-Million, so yeah conservative books aren't being banned and you know it!

Also, conservatives have many social media outlets too, such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Gab, Parler, and many other lesser known sites, so once again you're lying about conservatives being silenced, so quit your terrible lying and take your fake news elsewhere.

**Truthpecker**

December 1, 2021 at 4:17 am

LGBT is a clear danger to young people. Has nothing to do with censorship. Some things you have to ban else it would destroy the minds of the children or would you recommend e. g. to show a 8 year old child a porn movie? Censorship is not bad in the first place. It depends on how you use it.

**ThirteenthLetter**

December 1, 2021 at 7:24 am

I said the same here and my comment was erased. Good luck getting through to them.

**Erika**

November 30, 2021 at 11:53 pm

Nobody is asking for Harry Potter to be banned. The article mentions LGBT rights as a target of censorship, but the picture contradicts that, conflating the censorship of books with criticism of an author for her antiLGBT activities. and people making the personal choice not to partake in a franchise.

**D.T. R**

November 30, 2021 at 11:57 pm

I would only try to agree with your fake ban on All books narrative due to how well it was written. Sadly, I'd have to say that it lacks in investigative effort. You have chosen to write an opinion piece based on little research into the history of this matter.

There has only been one genre that has been systematically banned/ altered in schools throughout this nation's establishment. It is the history of the negro. And due to that effort, no other comparable controversial genre will be accepted either. So on one side you have the people who've been fighting for their books since before the schools started to allow them in and on the other side you have multiple other smaller parties comingling pushing their own personal book genres as they create new ones.

This very piece written by you is a small example of what's going on in those schools..

"Ethical Journalism strives to ensure the free exchange of information that is ACCURATE, FAIR, AND THOROUGH" – Society of Professional Journalism.

- seek truth and report it
- minimize harm
- Act independently
- be accountable and transparent

Until America deals with its underlying abuse and mistreatment of a particular group it will always suffer these types of issues... It's funny to us. Hate begets hate...

**Rob**

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December 1, 2021 at 3:06 am

I do not object to banning sexually explicit books from schools. There is no place or reason for there to be books about homosexuality, transgenderism, or any other perversion the left creates. These are confused children searching for an identity, and you want to propagandize them with a degenerate lifestyle. You are sick person if you think it's ok to pander this type of material to children.

Many of the racialist books were written to incite racism and hatred. If they want to read about slavery, you should start with Uncle Tom's Cabin, Fredrick Douglas's Autobiography, or Mark Twains novels. Most people have read Uncle Tom's Cabin, and they promote misconceptions about the true story and its true meaning. I believe the left promotes racism, because they use black people as a tool to garner political power and control.



Brad

December 1, 2021 at 3:25 pm

Rob,

I agree 100%. Children cannot make an informed decision when they have one viewpoint shoved down their throats. The author of this write up obviously believes there's only one side... Left.



Rob

December 1, 2021 at 3:24 am

my comment was banned



Rob

December 1, 2021 at 3:25 am

leftist communists need and promote racism



Neil Macleod

December 1, 2021 at 9:27 am

There is a difference between adult minds and children's minds. It should be up to school boards and parents what is in children's libraries. Liberals know that these books aren't banned, just not in school libraries where far from increasing "critical thinking" they have the potential to warp thinking. The contents of adult libraries will be wider because the readers are mainly adults. The books referred to above are mainly peddling narrow fictional views. They are not aimed at developing "critical thinking". If you want your porn Mr Pinko, you know where to get it.



NICK A ZIMMERMAN

December 1, 2021 at 1:50 pm

It is not that I mind being judged, I'm just concerned about who is the judge.

Comments are closed.